

HABS
MASS
7-SPRIF
4-

Springfield Municipal Group
(Springfield City Hall)
36 Court Street
Springfield
Hampden County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-1172

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

HABS
MASS,
7-SPRIE
4-

HABS No. MA-1172



CITY HALL
SPRINGFIELD,
MASSACHUSETTS
01103

NAME: SPRINGFIELD MUNICIPAL GROUP
(SPRINGFIELD CITY HALL, ~~CAMPANILE, MUNICIPAL~~
~~AUDITORIUM~~)

LOCATION: 36 COURT STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01103

BOUNDARIES:

SOUTHERLY: COURT STREET
WESTERLY: EAST CLOUMBUS AVE.
NORTHERLY: PYNCHON STREET
EASTERLY: CITY HALL PLACE

OWNER/
USE:

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD
CITY HALL HOUSES MUNICIPAL AGENCIES AND MEETING
ROOMS; SYMPHONY HALL IS THE HOME FOR THE SPRINGFIELD
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND VARIOUS CONCERT PERFORMANCES
ARE STAGED THERE. THE CAMPANILE HOUSES A WORKING
12- BELL TOWER AND A 14 FOOT ELECTRICAL CLOCK.

SIGNIFIGANCE: THE SPRINGFIELD MUNICIPAL GROUP HAS, SINCE ITS
DEDICATION IN DECEMBER OF 1913, BEEN THE SYMBOL OF
GOVERNMENT IN THE COMMUNITY AND A SOURCE OF PRIDE
TO HER CITIZENS. THE TWIN FACADES OF THE ADMINISTRA-
TION BUILDING AND THE MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM (NOW
NAMED SYMPNONY HALL) ARE OF A NEO-CLASSICAL DESIGN WITH
A 300 FOOT BELL TOWER (CAMPANILE) BETWEEN. ALL
THREE ELEMENTSFRONT UPON AN ELEVATED ESPLANADE
ON COURT STREET WHICH ALLOWS AN UNINTERRUPTED VIEW
OF THE GROUP. AT THE TIME OF ITS CONSTRUCTION AND
DEDICATION, IT WAS THE ONLY MUNICIPAL GROUP OWNED
AND MANAGED BY A MUNICIPALITY IN THIS COUNTRY.

DATE OF ERECTION: SPRINGFIELD'S FIRST CITY HALL WAS ERECTED IN
1854 AND WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY A SPECTACULAR
FIRE IN DECEMBER, 1905. ONE YEAR LATER, MAYOR
FRANCKE W. DICKINSON APPOINTED A 20 MEMBER MUNICIPAL



CITY HALL
SPRINGFIELD,
MASSACHUSETTS
01103

HABS No. MA-1172

page 2 CITY HALL

BUILDING COMMISSION TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR A NEW CITY HALL. IT WAS THE DECISION OF THIS COMMISSION TO HOLD A NATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION AND INVITED BIDS FOR ARCHITECTS TO PLAN A NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING. PROFESSOR WARREN P. LAIRD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENN. WAS ENGAGED AS THE EXPERT ADVISORY ARCHITECT. EIGHTY-TWO DIFFERENT DESIGNS WERE SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE, AND THE FIRST DESIGN OF F. LIVINGSTON PELL AND HARVEY CORBETT WAS CHOSEN OVER SUCH PLANS OF PEABODY AND STERNS, LORD AND HEWLETT, HALE AND ROGERS AND CASS GILBERT. IN MARCH OF 1909, THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED PELL AND CORBETT'S PLANS AND THE SITE (ON THE SAME SITE AS THE DESTROYED CITY HALL). IN OCTOBER OF 1909, THE CONTRACT FOR THE FOUNDATION FOR THE AUDITORIUM AND CAMPANILE WAS GIVEN TO THE FIRM OF HORTON AND HEMENWAY OF BOSTON. IN DECEMBER OF 1909, CONTRACTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SUPER-STRUCTURES WERE AWARDED TO THE A.E. STEPHENS CO. OF NEW YORK. BY OCTOBER 1913, THE FINAL STRUCTURE, THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, WAS COMPLETED. A GALA CITY-WIDE DEDICATION OF THE NEW MUNICIPAL GROUP WAS HELD ON DECEMBER 8-9, 1913.

CITY HALL'S EXTERIOR HAS REMAINED VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED THROUGHOUT IT'S 58 YEAR HISTORY. IN 1922, THE CENTER COURTYARD WAS FILLED IN WITH ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE A GROWING CITY GOVERNMENT. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION IN THE 1960'S TO BUILD ON THIS GROUND FLOOR ADDITION FOR ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE, BUT THE CONCEPT WAS REJECTED. IN THE UPCOMING FUTURE, CITY HALL WILL UNDERGO RENOVATIONS PRIMARILY TO THE INTERIOR, RESTORATION OF THE FORMAL MEETING ROOMS AND RE-LOCATION OF OFFICE SPACE. THE EXTERIOR OF THE STRUCTURE WILL REMAIN UNTOUCHED.



CITY HALL
SPRINGFIELD,
MASSACHUSETTS
01103

HABS No. MA-1172

page 3 City Hall

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR: THE NEO-CLASSICAL DESIGN OF THE MUNICIPAL GROUP IS OF STEEL AND REINFORCED CONCRETE WITH INDIANA LIMESTONE (BRESFORD) OUTER SHELL. AT THE TIME OF CONSTRUCTION, THE COST WAS \$2,000,000. EACH BUILDING IS 115 FEET WIDE, 175 FEET LONG and 75 FEET HIGH WITH 10 CORINTHIAN COLUMNS (EACH STRUCTURE) AT 41 FEET HIGH. MOST NOTABLE TO THE STRUCTURES ARE THE BRONZE CAST, BAS-RELIEF DOORS ON THE FRONT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, SYMPHONY HALL AND CAMPANILE BUILDINGS. A SERIES OF 16 PANELS, THEY TELL THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD AND IN 6 OTHERS, SYMBOLIZE THE CITY AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR. THE DOORS WERE EXECUTED BY GAIL SHERMAN CORBETT, WIFE OF THE ARCHITECT. ORIGINALLY THE DOORS WERE DESIGNED TO BE MADE OUT OF WOOD, BUT WHEN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COMMITTEE BECAME EXCITED ABOUT THE BEAUTY OF THE FACADE, THEY SUBSTITUTED THE HUGE BRONZE RELIEF DOORS. BOTH THE AUDITORIUM AND ADMINISTRATION DOORS SHOW THE CITY'S HISTORY FROM THE CITY'S FOUNDING IN 1636 TO 1863, WHILE THE CAMPANILE'S DOORS DEPICT A MAN AND WOMAN OF SPRINGFIELD, WITH THE COAT OF ARMS OF MASSACHUSETTS AND OF SPRINGFIELD, PLUS THE SYMBOLS OF JUSTICE AND THE BEE-HIVE, A SYMBOL OF A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY.

THE STRUCTURE IS 5 STORIES HIGH, ALL UTILIZED BY VARIOUS MUNICIPAL AGENCIES.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR: CITY HALL IS RECTANGULAR IN SHAPE, ORIGINALLY WITH A COURTYARD IN THE MIDDLE INNER SECTION. AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE COURTYARD WAS ENCLOSED ON THE GROUND FLOOR LEVEL IN 1922 TO ACCOMMODATE GROWING MUNICIPAL OFFICES.

THE ENTRANCE LOBBY HAS SIDE WALLS OF SINNA MARBLE AND THE GRAND STAIRCASE IS OF SKYROS MARBLE WITH CAST BRONZE AND MAHOGANY RAILINGS. THE CITY COUNCIL, ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS AND MAYORS OFFICES FURNISHED WITH CUBAN MAHOGANY. THERE IS MARBLE WAINSCOTTING THROUGHOUT THE CORRIDORS, MAHOGANY PANELING AND FRESCOED CEILINGS IN THE FORMAL CHAMBERS. THE LOBBY IS FINISHED WITH FLORENTINE MARBLE WITH QUARTERED OAK FLOORS, WHILE THE MAYOR'S OFFICE HAS A FLOOR OF TEAKWOOD.



CITY HALL
SPRINGFIELD,
MASSACHUSETTS
01103

HABS No. MA-1172
page 4 City Hall

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR (CON'T.)

THERE ARE TWENTY SEVEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF MARBLE THROUGHOUT THE GROUP, ALL COMING FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.

SITE: THE MUNICIPAL GROUP LIES IN THE HEART OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA. IT FACES SOUTH ON COURT SQUARE, A HISTORIC PARK THAT HAS BEEN THE CENTER OF THE CITY'S GOVERNMENTAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES. THE WEST SIDE OF CITY HALL IS BOUNDED BY WEST COLUMBUS AVENUE, TO THE NORTH BY PYNCHON STREET (NAMED AFTER THE FOUNDING FATHER) AND EASTERLY BY CITY HALL PLACE. ~~SEE ENCLOSED MAP~~

SPRINGFIELD'S MUNICIPAL GROUP IS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AS PART OF THE COURT SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT.

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS: THE ORIGINAL PRINTS ARE LOCATED IN THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT AND CAN BE OBTAINED THERE. SUBMITTED IS THE DRAWINGS AS SUBMITTED TO AMERICAN COMPETITIONS, OBTAINED FROM THE HISTORY AND GENEALOGY ROOM AT THE CITY LIBRARY.

INFORMATION: MUCH OF THE INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED FROM THE HISTORY AND GENEALOGY ROOM AT THE CITY LIBRARY, STATE STREET, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. FORTUNATELY, THEY HAVE MUCH OF THE DEDICATION BOOKLETS PRODUCED OF WHICH WE HAVE ENCLOSED A COPY. IT WOULD OUR SUGGESTION THAT FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE LIBRARY OR BUILDING DEPARTMENT RECORDS.

MARGARET A. LYNCH
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
SPRINGFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION
AUGUST 28, 1981
413-787-6020